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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, December 19, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Inexpensive Holiday Sweets from the Kitchen." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Homemade Christmas gifts sometimes are a great success and sometimes are just the contrary. Have I ever told you about the gifts of homemade candy that a friend of mine planned last year? This young lady decided that if she presented her friends with boxes of candy made in her own kitchen and with her own hands, her gift would have a nice personal touch and would be easy on her rather slim pocketbook. Up to that time she had only tried making the simplest kind of candy, such as fudge or taffy. But she got out her recipe book and went to work about a week before Christmas. She spent days and days laboring over chocolate creams, fancy nougats and all sorts of elaborate confections. She spent dollars and dollars for materials for the candy, as well as pretty boxes, gay wrapping paper and ribbons. But the candy turned out sticky, misshapen and generally uninviting in spite of all her hard work. No amount of trimming would make it look really tempting. And when she figured out expenses, she found that this unsuccessful candy actually cost more than the best candy on sale at stores.

What's the moral of this sad story? I'd say it is this: If you're going to make homemade presents, choose the kind that you can make well, the kind that won't be too difficult and too expensive. Nothing is more welcome than delicious dainties from the home kitchen. But why not choose the simple easy recipes that make good things? If possible make something original and different in the food line, but be sure the result will justify the use of material. If you have a specialty--perhaps a jam or a marmalade, candied fruit, cookies, or something else your friends have often praised, why not concentrate on this article for your homemade gifts?

I asked the Recipe Lady the other day to suggest some easily-made, simple and inexpensive goodies that would make successful Christmas gifts. She told me about so many of them that I can hardly keep them all in mind.

She suggests that at this time of year you can make many good and inexpensive Christmas sweets from the citrus fruits. Grapefruit or orange peel you can candy into a clear almost transparent and tender confection far superior to the hard, overcooked bitter peel often made. You can color this candied peel in delicate shades of red and green. Put the color in with the sirup. And be careful not to add too much, for color becomes deeper as the sirup cooks down. Most people, even the hard-to-please kind, would enjoy a box of this delicate fruit candy. And most people, men included, would welcome a jaunty little holiday box or basket containing half a dozen jars of your special marmalade tied with a red ribbon and a sprig of evergreen. For example, you might fill six little jars with amber marmalade, each jar holding just enough for breakfast.

Amber marmalade is simple to make and most delicious. Also, it's inexpensive. All you need for it is one grapefruit, one lemon, one orange, sugar, and a bit of salt.

Some of the nicest last-minute gifts from the kitchen are jars of homemade mincemeat or pumpkin all prepared ready for the Christmas or New Years' pie. You can cook the pumpkin or squash all ready to combine with the seasoning and ingredients for the pie. Then include a neat little copy of your pie recipe along with the jar you are giving away. Of course, mincemeat and prepared pumpkin won't keep in jars indefinitely unless they are properly canned, but they'll stay good and ready for use during the holidays if you keep them in the refrigerator.

Another suggestion. How about presenting some busy housewives you know with small glasses of your best cranberry sauce all ready for individual servings on their Christmas dinner table?

Speaking of cranberries, have you ever candied cranberries to give away as gifts? They are delicious in flavor and so bright and attractive that they make an excellent garnish for fruit cups, salads, desserts and so on, or as sweets to eat like candy. Candied cranberries will keep indefinitely if you store them in a tightly covered jar.

Among the holiday sweets made especially with the children in mind, fruit candies, especially dried fruit candies, are some of the best. Those Parisian sweets made by grinding several kinds of dried fruit together and then molding the mixture into balls or cubes and rolling them in sugar are very good as well as easy to make. They're wholesome for children and not too sweet. Dates, figs and prunes stuffed with nuts and fondant are good also. Popcorn balls have always been favorites with children. They are inexpensive and you can make them either with a plain taffy mixture or with maple or chocolate. Still another good confection for all ages in the family is Turkish delight made with gelatin and fruit juice. Another inexpensive candy for making at home is peanut brittle.

If you have a candy thermometer to use for making fondant or any candy requiring the boiling down of sirup, you'll be more sure of good results.

Tomorrow, we'll discuss plans for a low-cost Christmas dinner. An economy dinner tomorrow. Then on Thursday we'll plan a little more elaborate Christmas week.

